

DISCOURSE

UPON THE

Wonderful GREATNESS of the LORD GOD;
which, though it appear every where, is
yet perceived but by very few Men
to their great Comfort.

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L O N D O N :

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PSALM CXLV. 3.

*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
and his Greatness is unsearchable.*

SECTION I.



PART of the greatness of the Lord is laid before our bodily eyes. We need but open them, and look attentively upward, downward, and round about us; and we shall behold and see the admirable works

Part of the greatness of the Lord laid before our bodily and mental Eyes.

of his almighty power and supreme wisdom, which has appeared in the most eminent manner to above two hundred generations. Then we need but open the eyes of our minds, and duly consider and reflect upon the concatenation or linking together of every thing we behold and see by these our inward eyes, and we shall be wrapped up with admiration at the sight of the omnipotent and transcendently wise Providence, that has kept linked together so great variety of subjects continually jarring one with another, the light with darkness, the heat with cold, the production of a vast many things by the destruction of others, the succession of days by the ceasing of nights; teaching us, we are drawing nearer and nearer towards the end of this our life and the beginning of another,

ther, wherein there will be no darkness, but a perpetual Light.

Another part of the Lord's Greatness is conveyed to our bodily and mental ears.

MOREOVER, another part of the Lord's greatness is conveyed to our bodily ears. The refreshing and purifying winds; the gales filling up the sails, and by their means driving ships to their desired harbours; the storms and tempests tossing up and down, to and fro, the largest and heaviest vessels on the sea; and at the same time blowing down upon earth, or tearing in pieces the largest trees, uncovering houses, and laying some flat upon the ground.

THEN we need but open the ears of our minds, and hearken to what is conveyed to them. The glorious and most comfortable promises, as well as the dismal and most frightful threatnings made to us by the Almighty, his most benevolent acts, as well as his terrible ones.

Other Parts of the Lord's Greatness are perceived by our bodily and mental taste, smell, and touch.

WE need but consult our bodily taste, our smell, and our feeling, and we shall perceive with wonder the great variety of their pleasing and disagreeable objects, the ones to reward and make us happy, and the others to punish and render us miserable.

THEN we need but reflect upon our mental or spiritual taste, smell, and feeling, and the vast variety of their suitable objects, some to refresh and cheer our minds, and others to annoy and afflict them.

These things pondered upon, induce us to praise, extol, and adore the Greatness of the Lord.

AFTER we have considered these few things, among an infinite number of others; then let us view and admire, praise and adore the greatness of the Lord; let us extol and magnify it. And indeed we have all the reason, all the motives in the world so to do; especially if we will but dwell upon these divinely inspired words. *The eyes of all wait upon, or look unto thee, O Lord; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest*

Psalms cxlv. 15, 16.

thine

thine hand, and satisfiest the desires of every living thing. The eyes of all look unto thee. Now what a prodigious number of eyes have looked from the beginning of the world till now; and what a vast number of eyes look at present, and are to look as long as the sun and moon endure, unto the Lord for their various subsistence, their different increase, and their peculiar conveniencies. *Great is the Lord indeed!*

THOU openest thine hand. Oh! what a wonderful hand, to be able to provide for so immense number of different creatures! Oh! what wise hand, that is able to give proper dispositions to all sorts of them for their multiplication! Oh! what powerful and wise hand, to prepare proper conveniencies for each of their species! Oh! what bountiful hand, that knows how, and is willing to satisfy the desire of every living thing! *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!*

How powerful, wise, and bountiful the hand of the Lord is!

BUT what is all which I have mentioned, in comparison of what the Lord does in the heavens, and all over the whole universe? This we are altogether ignorant of, and is greatly above our present apprehension. Only this we may be sure of, that what is transacted therein, is agreeable and conformable to the omnipotency and the supreme wisdom of God, *who has made the earth by his power, says Jeremiah, who has established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.* However, the visible world and the invisible one, I mean the world that strikes our outward bodily senses, and the world that affects our inward and spiritual ones, the souls that act upon one another, the DIVINE SPIRIT that operates in them, and the Angelic ones that move them, are fully sufficient in this our present state, to give us notions of the *Lord's Greatness*, suitable to that state of ours.

What has been mentioned is not to be compared to what God does in the heavens, and all over the whole universe.

Jer. li. 16.

We are very far from being able to praise the Lord as the holy Angels do.

We must praise the Lord according to our several capacities.

THUS far it is necessary we should be acquainted with the *Greatness of the Lord*, that He may be greatly praised by us; greatly, that is, to the utmost of our capacities; for in our present state, we are very far from being able to praise Him as the holy Angels do, even as the righteous departed souls praise Him; and the Angels themselves are very far from being able to praise the Lord as their superiors the Archangels, the Cherubins, and Seraphins do. The glory that reflects upon the praisers of the Lord must be proportionable to their capacities, and their capacities are adequate to the ranks, to the excellencies, to the dignities to which they are raised by their great Lord. As here below amongst us men, some are much abler to praise the Lord, and so to bear the glory reflected from their praising Him, than others: For instance, men of a liberal education, of a great knowledge, of nobler souls than others, are undoubtedly more able to raise the praises of the Lord higher, and consequently, to enjoy the glory of it more than those who have not had that education, who have not obtained that knowledge, and are not blessed with so noble souls. This is what God neither requires in heaven nor upon earth. What He requires in both places is, that every individual should praise Him, according to the degrees of their several capacities. It is what our blessed Lord Jesus intimates in the parable of the talents. He that was entrusted with five; and another only with two, making both suitable improvements of them, were greatly commended and highly rewarded: but the third, who neglecting his one talent, made no improvement of it, how severely was he punished!

S E C T.

SECTION II.

AL L intelligent and rational creatures, from the highest to the lowest, are bound in duty to praise the Lord according to their several abilities; from the doing of it proceed not only an adequate glory, but also a proportionable felicity for their rewards; not only suitable commendations from their great Lord (the greatest glory they can possibly enjoy) but also suitable rewards from his inexhaustible bounty. But after all the greatest efforts the sublimest created spirits can possibly make, they are far, immensely far, from being able to give the Lord his due praises: The reason thereof is evident, and mentioned by *David*, it is because *his GREATNESS is unsearchable*.

All rational creatures are obliged to praise the Lord as much as they can.

WHAT of it is searchable by us men, even by all the glorified spirits, is not comparable to his essential GREATNESS; it can receive from them but a little part of its due praises; and so *let one generation praise his works to another, and declare his mighty acts; let us speak of the glorious honour of his majesty, and of his wondrous works; let men speak of the might of his terrible acts—and sing of his righteousness. Let all his angels, and all his hosts, the heaven of heavens, praise the name of the Lord; they cannot praise Him sufficiently; they can give Him but a little, very little part of his due praises, because his GREATNESS is unsearchable.*

Psalms cxlv. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Psalms cxlviii. 2, 4, 5.

IT is what I am now going to demonstrate by some instances.

FIRST, let us consider the GREATNESS of his Knowledge as well as we can. Indeed, let the sublimest spirits consider it as duly as they are able to do; can they, and are we able to conceive and

The Greatness of God's Knowledge.

comprehend this undoubted truth, that all the thoughts, all the desires, all the hopes, all the affections of every individual man, and of every individual Angel, have been and shall be as well known to the Divine Mind, as they are actually known at present. This cannot be denied, without denying the eternal and infinite being of Him, in whom we all live, move, or act, and have our own being or existence. But alas! this unquestionable truth, far from being duly reflected upon, is removed from the minds of most men, which are taken up by other things; some indeed useful for the benefit of mankind, but most of them pernicious to themselves, and fatal to their fellow creatures, and odious to their Creator. Now though this is perfectly known to the Divine Mind, yet his providence, instead of destroying such perverse people, preserves them, and does continually pour his benefits upon them: which brings me,

The Greatness of
the Lord's Lov-
ing kindness and
tender Mercies.

SECONDLY, to the consideration of the unsearchable GREATNESS of his Loving-kindness and tender Mercies, which we most happily experience, and very sensibly feel: But can we conceive and apprehend them? No, far from it. The Angels look into them, but all they can do is, to admire and wonder. In order to give some notions of God's Loving-kindness and tender Mercies towards us, let us suppose that any of us, even the best, the most benevolent, of a very forgiving temper, should have a clear insight in the heart of his most perfidious, treacherous, and ungrateful concealed enemy, and see therein the workings of his perfidy, treachery, ingratitude; I ask, how he would be affected? If he find that the greatest indignation against him should be stirred up within his breast, he may easily perceive how unconceivable and incomprehensible the

the Loving-kindnesses and tender Mercies of God are towards men; especially if he duly consider, that in all generations the heart of every individual man has been, is actually, and shall be laid open in the sight of the Almighty. Now what detestable dissimulations, hypocrisies, 'perfidiousness, treacheries and ingratitude, have not grievously, and do not constantly offend his all-seeing, most pure eye? And yet, He not only bore, and bears, and has supported, and does support them; but He also has entertained, cherished them, and afforded them, and does entertain, cherish them, and afford them innumerable Blessings, temporal and spiritual: He even continues to promise them a most happy and most glorious immortality, the inexhaustible riches of heaven, if they will but have a filial fear of offending Him, as good children have of offending their affectionate parents; if they will but pay Him the little, exceedingly little tribute of their love, in return of his wonderful and amazing love for them. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable: it is past finding out.*

WHAT prodigious blindness must men be struck with, notwithstanding the bright and admirable light of the gospel! What surprising incredulity must they not be possessed by, notwithstanding the most evident proofs of the GREATNESS of the LORD, upon which all their present, future, and eternal welfare intirely depends. If I should ask any man, whether he truly and really believes the all-seeing eye of God? would he not answer me readily, with some resentment for my questioning it, to be sure he does? If to this enquiry I should add these two, whether his life and conversation, his thoughts, desires, hopes, and affections, are agreeable to his belief? and whether he would not be ashamed to act and to speak, to think, desire, and

The prodigious blindness of men, and their surprising incredulity.

and hope as he does; and to be affected, and sometimes greatly affected as he is for trifles, were it known to good, judicious, grave, and discerning great men? No doubt but he would be very much ashamed of it. And what are the goodness, gravity, judiciousness, and discernment of the greatest of all men, in comparison of the righteousness, majesty, wisdom, and piercing eye of the greatest of all beings, whose GREATNESS is unscrutable, infinitely above all their greatnesses put together?

SECTION III.

The Greatness of
the Lord's Wis-
dom.

THE Lord is not only Great in Knowledge, in Goodness, and Mercy, but also,

THIRDLY, in Wisdom, which is sufficiently obvious to us when we will be attentive, though we be very short-sighted; for with all our searches and scrutinies, we can find out but very little of it in comparison of what it is in itself. However, the work of mens redemption carried on in all ages from the beginning of their creation to our time, and which is to be carried on to the last age, even to the last man, is full, and will be full of wondrous events; for that this Wisdom's grace has worked efficaciously all along, and will continue to work thus in so innumerable multitudes of souls and hearts of all nations and people, is amazing, and such a GREATNESS as is *unsearchable*.

THIS we shall be in some measure sensible of, if we duly consider what prudence and skill, what contrivances and cautions are required to persuade our fellow creatures to do what is requisite in order to seek peace and ensue it, to avoid mischief, and to search after happiness, to turn from evil ways, and to walk in the paths of virtue. Now what

what is this in comparison of that divine Wisdom, which by its efficacious grace has turned in all the past generations, and does turn in the present generation, and will turn in all future generations, a vast number of various hearts, some addicted to superstition and idolatry, others to avarice and filthy lucre; some swayed by ambition, and the desire of domineering over their fellow creatures, their acquaintance and neighbours; others bent upon their selfish interest, and always ready to sacrifice the public good to it, and so gave formerly, and give at this present time, way to their ease, conveniency, and selfishness, at the imminent hazard of their future and eternal welfare? What is it in comparison of that supreme Wisdom that has framed, fitted, and disposed in times past, and frames, contrives, fits, and disposes at present, and will frame, contrive, fit, and dispose every thing in such manner, as will be the admiration of all intelligent and rational beings to all eternity, and will finally prove the glory of their sovereign Lord, and their own felicity? *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his Greatness is unsearchable!* Of this we may be more and more sensible, if we will but ponder upon and weigh according to our abilities,

FOURTHLY, the Greatness of his Power.

The Greatness of the Lord's Power.

WE all know, that with a few words, uttered for six days one after another, He has created and adjusted this whole world, with all the great variety of vegetable, living, and rational creatures which it contains. Indeed when the business was concerning the creation of man, more words were used. God then said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

Gen. i. 26.

And

And no wonder, considering the excellency of that creature, endued with admirable faculties, and the marvellous strict union there is in man of matter and spirit, the present immortality of the one, and the future immortality of the other, when they both shall be reunited for ever and ever, in order to partake of the glory and of the felicity of God, which are now greatly above all we can conceive and comprehend. However, we may praise the Lord's works, and declare his mighty acts to one another; which the more we do, the more delighted we shall find ourselves, the better pleased our Maker will be; for it is for that purpose He made them, that we may admire these wonderful works as we are enjoying them.

The Greatness of the Lord appears in every object that affects our senses.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his Greatness is unsearchable. It is so in every object we see, in every sound we hear, in every thing we touch, we smell, and taste: The relation, fitness, conformity, and agreeableness there is between them and the organs of our senses, cannot be sufficiently admired; but they are all above our present conception and apprehension.

If we reflect upon the constant diurnal and annual motions of the earth, how great must the power be to move it! If we reflect upon the air, how great must be the power to make it still and gentle, when it is boisterous and fierce! If we reflect upon the clouds, by which we are frequently blessed with refreshing and profitable showers, and sometimes punished by hail and lightnings, how great must be the power by which they are directed! If we reflect upon the moon, the sun, and the stars, how great must be the power to keep them within due bounds, to forward their happy influences, and to prevent the mischiefs they might do, were they not over-ruled!

AND

AND what is that power in comparison of the power which has controlled and restrained from the beginning of the world, and does controll and restrain now, and will controll and restrain till the day of the general Resurrection of the dead, the wicked men and evil spirits? What is that power, in comparison of that power which our supreme Lord and Judge will exert at the last Judgment, in the presence of all the holy angels, of all men, and of all the devils? This tremendous power we shall behold and see then exerted. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his Greatness is unsearchable.*

BUT to speak only of this our present time. Could we see the innumerable dangers we are continually exposed to, and delivered from; I call them innumerable, because there has not been, and there is not an hour of this our life, but what has not incurred, and does incur, dangers with regard to our bodies and souls! Was GOD pleased so to open our eyes as He did *Gebazi's*, that we might see, as *Elisba's* servant at the request of his master did then; how surprized and amazed should we not be, to see ourselves surrounded with friends and foes! And how dismayed and affrighted should we not be, did we not see at the same time, as *Gebazi* did, that our friends are more numerous and powerful than our fiends; and so that they are much abler to preserve us, than they to destroy us! Oh! could we see the devices and plots formed against us, the snares laid for us, and the great efforts exerted to undo us, with what zeal should we not praise and glorify our divine Defender and Protector! But then our faith in GOD's Power and Wisdom, in his Goodness and Mercy, should have, if we did see these things, little or no room to exert itself. Now it is by faith that we are to be admitted into the

The continual dangers we are exposed to, and delivered from.

the abode of the blessed, and afterwards into the most glorious kingdom of heaven, prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

SECTION IV.

Pfalm cxlv. 13.
Did we truly believe that the Lord's dominion endureth throughout all generations, should we live as we do?

THUS we see, in the clearest manner, that GOD's *kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*, and that *his dominion endureth throughout all generations*. Do we believe this? O, yes, to be sure, will every one who professes to be a Christian answer; but if we truly believe it, how come we to live in direct contradiction to our belief? If we believe sincerely that *the Lord's dominion endureth throughout all generations*, how come we to live in ours as we do? How can it be accounted for by our conduct, behaviour, and conversation? Is it not obvious to any attentive person, that most men among us really live and converse as if they believed no GOD, no supreme Governor of the world, no wise Director of events, no Searcher of hearts, no Judge before whom they are to give account of their ridiculous thoughts, foolish desires, vain hopes, rash words, evil affections, lewd lives, and sinful deeds? It is indeed but too obvious: And that an attentive person, if he be a good charitable man, must be grieved to the quick to behold and see so many of his fellow creatures run counter to the government and the direction of the divine providence.

I WILL only mention two instances, amongst a great many that could be produced.

Do we not hear every day complaints relating to the government and the directions of the divine Providence? Did ever the *Israelites* murmur and complain more and oftner, than the Christians actually do? Does not one complain of the want of rain, another of the need of fair weather, a third

third of the cheapness of victuals, a fourth of their dearness, a fifth of his health, which he destroys by indulging himself excessively, a sixth of the unequal distribution of riches, honours, dignities, of which he would make a pernicious use, were he entrusted with them; a seventh because he does not succeed in his undertakings, never considering whether they be according or contrary to the plan which the most wise providence of God has formed for the welfare of the whole society of mankind?

THE other instance which I shall mention is our unthankfulness for the enjoyments of a vast number of blessings, even of the most exquisite delights and pleasures this world does afford, both corporeal and spiritual; as health, vigor, and strength; the freedom from chronical distempers, the gout, the rheumatism, the stone, the gravel, and other terrible plagues of mankind; the security of our persons and goods, attended with peace and quiet; sound refreshing sleeps, the tranquility and contentment of the mind; the opportunities of making one another happy by our intimacy and free conversations, by our communicating to each other the power our great Maker has given us to contribute to our mutual felicity; the liberty of professing openly our holy Religion, and of hearing and reading the word of God, the true enlivening food of our souls; our free access at any time to GOD through our Lord JESUS CHRIST, by which we may lay before our heavenly Father all our needs and lawful desires; our frequent admission to the holy communion, in which we may partake of the inestimable benefits of CHRIST's redemption, of his sufferings and death, of his infinite merits and righteousness, of his resurrection, ascension into heaven, of his sitting at the right hand of his everlasting Father's most glorious

The unthankfulness of men for the great number of blessings which they actually enjoy.

glorious Majesty, at which he obtains our pardon for the continual faults we commit; He defends, protects, and blesses his faithful servants; confounds and baffles their enemies; enables them to resist and to bring their efforts for their perdition to nought, and renders them in due time triumphant.

If we did truly believe in God, after we have done our part, we should rest satisfied, and rely upon Him, for He cares for us.

Mens diffidence of God is fatal to them.

Now if we did truly believe in God, if we did sincerely put all our confidence in his Power and Wisdom, in his Goodness and Mercy, after we have performed our part, and have done what is required of us; should we not rest satisfied, and depend altogether upon the performance of our omnipotent, most wise, heavenly Father, whose Loving-kindness and tender Mercies for us are greatly above the tenderest love and affection of any fathers and mothers for their most beloved children? Let us not therefore say and confess by word of mouth, that we "believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," and then belie shamefully what we have said and confessed; for God will not be mocked with impunity, without severe punishments. We have had terrible examples of it recorded in the history of all ages; we have particularly fearful instances from the beginning of this present age. Many are obvious in our great metropolis, in our neighbourhoods abroad and at home; but our unhappiness is, that we pass them over slightly; we seldom or never lay them to heart, till it is too late to prevent the mischiefs which fall upon us, till we are overtaken by some judgment or other. Then indeed some of us awake out of their slumber, and as the *Israelites* did, cry unto the Lord, who delivers them. But does true amendment follow? Alas! but too seldom. Too many return into their old sinful courses, and continue in them, till they are again overtaken by some punishment, from

from which when they are delivered by their crying unto the most High, they soon return into their evil ways. Now I appeal, I will not say, to true sincere Christians, but only to men of common sense and reason, whether this is to believe rightly in God? Is it not to believe only that there is a God, as the Devils do, with fear and trembling, but not with returning to that sole source of all happiness and glory? Is it not to run with the eyes of their minds shut towards their destruction, till they be stopt by some punishments; and soon after the punishments are graciously remitted, they shut their eyes again, and run again to the same end. O fatal effect of the Old Man's working in human hearts! What is the cure of that voluntary obstinate blindness? There is but one, the efficacious divine Grace offered pressingly and most graciously to us in the Gospel, of which we may be all partakers. Thus does it appear evidently, that *great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised*, for his wonderful and amazing loving-kindness towards mankind. The height and the depth, the length and the breadth of his GREATNESS are in truth unsearchable.— However, as the search of it, such as it can be, is full of comfort, I will dwell more upon it that we may entertain as high notions of the Lord's GREATNESS, as we can reach in our present state.

The only cure of voluntary blindness, is God's Grace offered to us in the Gospel.

SECTION V.

THE name JEHOVAH, given to Him in Scripture, is only by accommodation to our capacity. That tremendous, wonderful, most sacred, and excellent name, is a compound of two words, *Je* or *Jab*, that signifies *essence* by excellence, in the most transcendent degree, and out of opposition to any other whatever, and

The meaning of Jehovah.

B

Hovab

Hovab that denotes an actual Being vested by his own nature with incomprehensible perfections.— Thus does that name give an idea or notion of a Being necessary, independent, self-existent, and infinitely supreme.

Of El,

EL is another name of the Lord, the meaning of which is properly a Being that enlightens by his own rays, or acts by his natural irradiation or brightness; a notion borrowed from the manner with which the Sun enlightens, vivifies, and influences, supports and cherishes, every thing in this material world. But how immensely short is that borrowed notion from the reality of what it represents to us? that notion of the Lord's omnipotence and omnipresence, of his acting constantly, without the least interruption, upon both the material and spiritual beings, included in the immense universe. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his Greatness is altogether unsearchable* to any considerable height and depth.

and of Elohim,
ascribed to God.

Gen. i. 26.

iii. 22.

A THIRD name ascribed to GOD, and not to Him alone, is *Elohim*. Interpreters derive it from *Elab*, which signifies *Oath*, and they conclude from thence, that *Elohim*, which is in the plural number, denotes persons bound among themselves by an oath, or the strictest agreement which shews the plurality of the divine Persons and the ties within which, it is supposed, they are reciprocally entered in order to preserve, and effectually to save Man. *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Behold man, says the Lord GOD, is become as one of us, to know good and evil.* In these two passages it is observed that the word *Elohim* is joined to a verb, and to relative names in the plural number, which manifestly gives us to understand that the word *Elohim* denotes the plurality of the divine persons.

It must be observed here, that we can much better conceive and apprehend infinite perfection, under the notion of three divine Persons in one divine Nature, than we can under the notion of one single Person. For instance, with regard to the divine perfect felicity, we are better able to apprehend it in some measure by the means of three most glorious, all-sufficient, and omnipotent Persons, who, by an internal communication of the same divine nature from one another, have all three, from all eternity, rejoiced, and do rejoice, and will rejoice for ever and ever, in the supreme felicity of each other: we are better able, I say, to apprehend this in some measure, than if we were wrongfully prepossessed, that there is but one solitary divine person, to rejoice in himself alone; this prepossession has been the case of most men in all ages; wherefore we cannot sufficiently bless and glorify God, for having been graciously pleased to reveal unto us so great, so wonderful, so comfortable a mystery, the mystery of the most glorious, most holy, and most blessed, for ever blessed Trinity.

Infinite perfection may be better conceived under the notion of three divine persons, than under the notion of one.

WHEN GOD sent *Moses* to the children of *Israel*, and *Moses* asked Him what he should answer them, when they should say unto him, *What is the name of him that sent thee?* The reply was this, I AM WHAT I AM: say unto them, I AM has sent me unto you; that is, He, who alone necessarily exists; who alone is self-existent, who alone always was, and by whom alone the whole Universe and all the Beings which it includes, subsist and are preserved. He alone is absolutely independent, and all other Beings whatsoever in heaven and upon earth, intirely depend upon his mere will and pleasure: as they are all the works of his power and wisdom, and the objects of his benevolence and care; so they all equally depend up-

God, at the request of *Moses*, tells him his name, who he truly is, the only self-sufficient Being.

on HIM: none of them can possibly subsist in their respective spheres, in their various states, but by his continued support.

SECTION VI.

The whole universe is the palace of God's supreme Majesty.

GREAT is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his Greatness is unsearchable. The whole universe, in comparison of which this world of ours is but one part, even a small part; the whole universe, I say, is the palace of his supreme Majesty, and all the spacious heavens are only as a canopy over his tremendous and most glorious throne. Oh! let us do as king *David* did, call upon our souls, and bid them stir up themselves in order to praise, extol, adore, and glorify the greatness of the Lord. Let us endeavour to make the greatness of his wonderful power, of his admirable wisdom, of his amazing love for all his creatures, and of his unspeakable bounty towards them, known; that we may all bless and magnify his great NAME. But alas! as the utmost of our endeavours, and the highest of our thoughts are infinitely below his greatness; so are they infinitely too low to express the glorious honour of his Majesty, and duly to praise HIM. However, let us do it according to our several abilities, and He will most graciously accept of our sincere efforts, such as they are, and reward them above all we can conceive and apprehend.

The highest of our thoughts are infinitely below his greatness.

The wonderful greatness of his bounty.

To make any reasonable men sensible of this, I desire them duly to observe, how great the bounty of the Lord must needs be, since the very earth, the habitation of very ungrateful creatures and grievous sinners, is full of his riches; since it actually contains immense treasures of delights for all our senses, for our sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch, when we are in health; and of

reme-

the wonderful Greatness of the Lord, &c.



remedies, when we are afflicted with illness. In order to have some tolerable notions of these riches with which the earth abounds, let us consider not only the vast number of people in all countries that have been, that are, and shall be maintained and cherished by them, according to their several circumstances and constitutions; but also the innumerable multitude of all sorts of living creatures, that find in it the several foods proper for their several natures and tastes. *The eyes of all*, says the royal prophet, *wait upon thee, O Lord, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.* But I need not dwell upon this, for every day we all partake of these riches, some in greater, some in less plenty, as the perfectly wise Providence judges it most fitting for the good and welfare of mankind in general, and of each person in particular; and we perceive, that all beasts, flying creatures, and creeping things, have their proper habitations, nourishments, and pleasures.

Psalms cxlv. 15,
16.

Now if the earth, the habitation of very corrupt, perverse, and ungrateful men, of vile, mean, and despicable creatures in our eyes, be full of the Lord's riches, we may easily judge of his immense treasures for the pure and holy spirits in heaven, for the righteous souls, his faithful servants departed, in the abode of the blessed; for those who shall be so happy as to find themselves after the general Resurrection, and at the universal Judgement, at the right hand of the beloved Son of God, the supreme Judge of Men and Angels, in the kingdom of God. But *as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, they cannot be described. They are far above all we can imagine

If the earth, the habitation of perverse creatures, is full of the Lord's treasures, how immense treasures must there be in heaven for the holy Angels, and for the righteous souls in the abode of the blessed, and afterwards in the kingdom of God, for them to enjoy to all eternity!

A DISCOURSE *upon*

gine and conceive, in our very low way of thinking. However, we shall most happily experience, and most delightfully feel, what perhaps shall be still ineffable, above all expressions and descriptions, though our faculties shall be greatly increased and enlightened.

SECTION VII.

Pſalm civ. 24.

How obvious the wisdom of the Lord is,

O Lord, *how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.* The wisdom of the Lord is so obvious, that unless men shut the eyes of their minds purposely, and they be industrious to keep them very close, unless they are besotted and become quite stupid, they must necessarily behold and perceive the greatness of the Lord's wisdom in the works which they see daily with their bodily eyes, and in all the objects that are adapted, and do relate to their senses; the hearing, the touch, the taste, the smell. *The heavens declare the glory of God, says the royal prophet, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge: there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard,* to proclaim his marvellous wisdom.

Pſal. xix. 1, 2, 3.

The admirable regularity of the constant motions of the Earth and Moon, are a proof of that wisdom.

WE need but reflect upon the constant and admirable regularity of the motions of the Earth and Moon, absolutely necessary for the preservation and the well-being of all living creatures. These most swift motions of theirs have continued from the creation of the world, in order to make successively the sky above us and the sky below us, (both the Hemispheres round about the Earth) partakers of the light and influences of the Sun and Moon. Had they ceased never so little a time, what disorders, what mischiefs, had not ensued?

LET

LET us consider here the Sun and the Moon, and dwell a little upon them. Were the Sun, that prodigious fiery globe, at a greater or a less distance from the Earth, the effects thereof would be these, either we should want light and heat, or we should have too much of each; either cold or heat would be fatal to us. Were the Sun still larger and nearer, it would destroy both inhabitants and habitation. Were it less or farther off, a due influence and a vivifying power would be wanting; and so we, and all living and vegetable creatures, would be faint, and languishing, and die. But its distance and largeness are so wisely contrived, that its light and warmth are agreeable to the several constitutions, and conducive to the welfare of the different inhabitants of the earth, its rays duly warm, cherish, and vivify their bodies, as well as the animals and plants created for their several uses.

So is the just or proper distance of the Sun and Moon from the Earth.

Now, who but an all-wise Being has made the Sun of so fit a size, and set it at so proper a distance? who has so directed the motions of the earth about it, that its light and warmth, at certain precise times, never fail the inhabitants thereof? the vicissitudes of day and night, and the different seasons of the year, do constantly succeed one another. Though the earth swim in a fluid matter, yet it does not deviate from its usual course, but keeps constantly in it, and by these means brings on to all its different parts the proper seasons, in which its fruits, necessary for the subsistence of men and animals, grow and ripen.

EVERY fortnight the Moon supplies in both Hemispheres the office of the Sun when it is absent, by reflecting the light, which it has received from it. Who does not then see plainly in the regular course of the Earth and of the Moon, which have continued near six thousand years, and

Jer. li. 15.

Psalm cxxxvi. 2,
3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

in their wonderful order, upon which the preservation and welfare of men depend, who does not perceive clearly that an omnipotent and all-wise Being is the director of their wonderful motions, the contriver of the admirable order wherein they are, that *he has made the earth by his power, and established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his understanding*, says *Jeremiah*. Oh! let us therefore praise and admire the marvellous greatness of his wisdom and bounty; and with the Psalmist, *give thanks unto the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords, who by his wisdom hath made the heavens, and stretched out the earth above the waters, and made great lights, the sun to rule by day, the moon and the stars to rule by night, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

BESIDES these obvious marks of the divine wisdom above, if we bring down our eyes, and view our Atmosphere, and duly ponder upon that region round about the earth, we shall perceive a wonderful contrivance, and find other surprizing marks of the greatest wisdom.

SECTION VIII.

The admirable
nature and use-
fulness of the
Air.

THE nature of the Air is such that it supports the clouds, and by its motion carries rain contained in them from place to place, and causes it to drop upon the earth, which is refreshed thereby, and grows productive. It is such that it receives within itself what occasions winds, which prevents its stagnation, that would be pernicious to all living creatures; and it favours the correspondence and the trade, which distant nations have with one another. It is such that by its elasticity or spring, it makes the blood of animals, the sap of trees, and the juices of all plants to circulate, and causes them to breathe.

By

By its quick motions it conveys sounds to the ears; and by its transparency lets in the light of the Sun to the eyes. It is such that it proves the repository of gross exhalations, which cause thunder and lightning, so useful to destroy the vermin that would destroy the productions of the earth. It proves the repository of the waters drawn out of the sea, which, being made fresh and kept in the clouds, and driven by the force of the winds from country into country, drop commonly in gentle showers, wherever it is wanted.

Now, who has formed the Air, and contrived it so wonderfully? Who has? but an infinite wise Being, the eternal GOD whom we adore.

The contriver of the Air for our benefit, is our most wise GOD.

If we reflect upon the Water, we may observe, that this liquid and transparent body is well fitted for the use of men; and find that, though it is a thin and fluid element, yet it proves so strong, that burdens of a vast weight are carried and wafted over it from place to place, let them be at never so great a distance. We shall find that the rivers after they have run, not in straight but in winding streams, and thereby refreshed and enriched vast tracts of land, roll and discharge into the seas; whilst their fountain-heads are supplied with other water, by secret channels in which it becomes fresh. These rivers and seas are stored with a vast many sorts of living creatures, of all sizes, very useful to men. Now who made and preserves them all? who keeps so exactly the many distinctions there are among them, and directs them to their proper ends? It is undoubtedly an infinitely powerful, wise, and good BEING.

The wisdom of GOD appears also manifestly in the other element, the Water.

WHO regulates the tide that serves so great purposes? who said to the seas, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be staid*,—says Job and Jeremiah? *Who hath placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree,*

Job xxxviii. 11.

Jer. v. 22.

cree, that it cannot pass; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail; tho' they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

The wonderful harmony and admirable correspondence between the works of the creation, reflected upon.

HERE the wonderful harmony and the admirable correspondence between the works of the creation, must be reflected upon. The Sun spreads its light all over the atmosphere of the Air; and the Air transmits it to our eyes: the Sun through it duly warms and vivifies the surface of the earth, and thereby greatly contributes to its fertility, and that fertility to the well-being of its inhabitants. The Air dilates their lungs, and their lungs serve for respiration, for the circulation of the blood, and the formation of the voice. The seas afford vapours that rise in the Air, and are turned there commonly into gentle showers, that refresh the plants, and dilute their proper nourishment. These plants propagate themselves, and produce the proper food for living creatures. These living creatures multiply their several kinds and serve men; which powerfully engage men to serve God. Who is the attentive man that does not perceive in that harmony and correspondence, the wonderful greatness of the Lord's power, wisdom, and bounty?

The greatness of the Lord appears even in the smallest insect.

I MUST shew that amazing greatness, even in the least and most imperceptible of his works. In the smallest insect known to us, we find matter enough to exercise and confound our faculty of thinking and reasoning, which we so much boast of, and we discover many wonders. We find, by magnifying glasses, all the parts of that imperceptible insect's body, imperceptible with our naked eyes, we find them distinct from one another; all its limbs perfectly well organized with their several senses: all which must have their muscles, nerves, veins, arteries, vital parts, and in them animal spirits, which have their peculiar proper-

properties, and are distinct from one another. How many millions of living creatures are there, so little, that they escape our sight and feeling? and yet they have their proper organs, food, and habitations. Now, all these, with what belongs to them, are the works of God, as well as the heavens and the earth, and require ineffable power and wisdom in their formation.

BUT after having looked upwards and downwards round about us, let us now dwell a little more upon ourselves.

SECTION IX.

FIRST, upon our body. Its texture and frame, the fitness and usefulness of its parts, their several intentions or ends are full of wonders; so is in particular the vital principle infused into them. Now, who but an infinite wisdom attended with an omnipotent power, could contrive in our body so many passages, through which the proper nourishment is conveyed to its various parts? and who else could fit so many joints, and lay so many muscles and sinews for strength, and all sorts of motions? we have been formed with such a comely distinction, and variety of powers; and are preserved with such a care and providence, that the consideration thereof strikes a thinking and intelligent man with astonishment. *I will praise thee, O Lord, says David, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.* Let us now consider with a due attention,

Reflections upon
our bodies.

Psal. cxxxix. 14.

SECONDLY, the far better part of ourselves, I mean our mind. What are the wonders we have observed hitherto in the creation, compared to the wonders that are conspicuous in the faculties of that mind of ours? Therein the greatness of the

Reflections upon
our minds.

the Lord our Creator appears most gloriously. The very union of our mind with our body, by which they both act upon each other, and sympathize, and are affected by their mutual pleasures and pains, deserves our greatest admiration. Its faculties of perceiving, remembering, and understanding, of reflecting, reasoning, judging, and determining, are wonderful; so is its power of raising in a moment its thoughts from this lower world, to the highest heaven. But the noblest and most advantageous of its faculties are those, whereby it gets the knowledge of its Maker and Preserver, obeys his laws, and imitates his perfections; whereby it loves and adores, serves and praises him; and so obtains his favour, and becomes partaker of his perfect felicity, and eternal glory.

OUR mind, that wonderful being of God's making, intirely different from matter, is seated in the original point of motion and of sensation. There it receives, like a great ruler, without moving from the center of its allotted government, informations from within, and intelligences from abroad; and by these informations and intelligences, it is instructed in every thing it is to do and to prevent: and accordingly it informs and directs the whole man, and sends forth its orders, which are executed in due time, sometimes well, sometimes ill; as its dependents are duly or unduly disposed.

THUS does the mind, by the appointment of God's free-will and admirable wisdom, rule and manage, by the means of its thoughts and influence, the organs and limbs of its body; though both as different from one another, as two creatures can possibly be. The senses bring informations and intelligences to the mind, and the mind passing its judgements thereupon, gives its orders,
some

some of which are immediately executed, and others delayed. O wonderful association and agreement! The mind, being acquainted by the sense of feeling, with what passes inwardly, takes the properest measures it can about it, and by this and the other senses being acquainted with what passes outwardly, judges sooner or later of the different relations and properties, that continually arise or flow from the things we are surrounded with, of their colour, shape, size, distance, and sound. It rejoices in the beauties which we see flowing from the works of God, and in the blessings we enjoy by their means. Now when the mind is endued with a benevolent, noble, and generous temper, its own happiness increases by the happiness of others, especially when it contributes towards it.

If then the things we are familiar with, cause wonder in us when we duly reflect upon them, though our knowledge of them is very superficial, though we know but few of their properties, qualities, and powers, how great would our surprize be, were the curtains drawn! did we see not only the outside of things, but also their inside, their real constitution! did we see them as they truly are! we often cannot but be ashamed, when we find we are not able to account for objects we are familiar with, for objects which are daily obvious to our senses; not considering that every work of God, even the least considerable in our opinion, requiring an almighty power, and an unspeakable wisdom, is in some respects as incomprehensible to us, as those we admire most; and indeed, who can find out the springs, the essence, and the rule of any of the Lord's works, let them be never so familiar to us? Were then the veil that covers things laid aside, how plain-

If the things we are familiar with cause wonder in us, though we are far from knowing them duly, how great would our surprize be, did we see their real constitution.

ly and conspicuously would the greatness of the Lord's power, wisdom, and goodness appear, even in the smallest things. But in that case, both our outward and inward organs would prove too weak; and in all probability our very minds, in the corrupt condition they are now in, would be dazzled. In that case it would be requisite, that our inward and our outward senses, as well as our minds should be altered, and made such as would not be fit for this our present state of trial and probation.

The assistance of our reason, tho' very dim, is of great service to us.

THOUGH our reason at present is by no means able to dive into the bottom of things, and to find out their principles and fitnesses, their nature and springs; yet, its help is of very great use and service to us; for through its dimness we perceive a wonderful and inimitable wisdom, power, and goodness, spread all over the Lord's works; which reason ascribes to God, who, being present every where, is the sole contriver and director of all things; and thereby reason engages us to adore and glorify, to depend upon and serve that great Lord, as the only source of all good, as the author of all perfect gifts.

How far reason can go, and be serviceable to us.

REASON, if we will but duly hearken to it, will make us sensible enough of the fitnesses and proprieties of things, to convince us, that there ever was, and ever will be a supreme wisdom, an almighty power, and an ineffable goodness to direct all things to their proper ends. Thus much we may pretend to know, but did we pretend to come to the thorough knowledge of all the ends God proposes in his directions, did we pretend to determine what is fitting now, and will be fitting hereafter, would be an unpardonable presumption. Though our reason may apprehend some fitnesses and proprieties in the relations which many things and actions, both natural and moral

have

have to one another; yet as it cannot comprehend them all, it is reasonable to suppose, and it must necessarily be supposed, that there is a farther design, a more hidden fitness, a greater excellency and beauty in things than we can possibly perceive. As there is a fitness of things that relate to this present life, which fitness we can apprehend; so is there undoubtedly a fitness of things that respects also the future life, which we cannot apprehend; and yet in reality that fitness tends directly to future purposes infinitely good and wise.

SECTION X.

THIS may be proved clearly; for either there is a present absolute fitness in things, or there will be in them a future absolute fitness. This the infinite wisdom requires undeniably. Now, if there were an absolute fitness in the present state of things, then there could be no change in any thing, since what is absolutely best can never be altered for the better; and yet things here do evidently change: they must therefore have only a present fitness, that tends to some future absolute and unchangeable fitness or perfection, to which this fitness relates.

FROM what has been said, we may then conclude, that there is a present fitness in the present state of things sufficiently obvious to demonstrate, that there is an over-ruling wisdom, that does now and will ever direct all things for the best of the whole; and that since in this present state things do change, they are in a state of imperfection; and therefore there must be another state, to which all present things are directed by an infinite

finite wise Providence, in order to bring them to a final and unchangeable perfection.

THIS we might be sensible of, if we would but observe what frequently passes in this present state; for we should find there happen many wonderful changes; and yet by the bare light of our reason, we cannot see, how these changes are made, and what relation there is between this present state and a future one, that are as different the one from the other, as difference can make them. This is an instance thereof. We know there are several living creatures that work their own sepulchres, and that after they have continued therein for a certain time, in an apparent state of death, and laid aside their former organs and limbs, do afterwards break through the gates of that apparent state of death, and put on a state and form of greater beauty and perfection than could have entered into the mind of a wise man to conceive. Now the wonderful change of these living creatures is, as I have already intimated it, an emblem of the wonderful change that will happen to our bodies at the Resurrection.

If the one be a matter of fact, which we cannot deny, though we are not able to comprehend, how the change is made; why should we doubt of the Resurrection of the body, of which there have been several instances, and which has been positively promised by the Almighty, and asserted again and again by the Spirit of truth; only because there are difficulties in it, which we cannot solve; as if we would measure the unsearchable greatness of God's power and wisdom by our short-sighted and very limited faculties? Is not this a most ridiculous and unpardonable presumption?

To conclude this discourse, I shall only make these two short observations, after I have joined and said, with *David*, *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.*

1 Chron. xxix.
11, 12, 13.

My first observation is, That the time is a coming, when inattentive, stupid, and regardless men, who have eyes, and so shut them that they see not; and ears, and will not hear; understanding, and care not to understand the things that appertain to their present and eternal welfare, because they oppose their vile inclinations; who take little or no notice of God's power, wisdom, and goodness, but chiefly mind what gratifies their appetites, and abuse the great variety of the good things which they enjoy: alas! the time is a coming, when they shall be no longer the tender care of the divine gracious Providence, of which they are so unworthy.

My second observation is, That since there is most certainly an omnipotent, infinitely wise, and perfectly good BEING, who has made us, who provides all things necessary for our sustenance both temporal and spiritual, it is undoubtedly our indispensable duty to admire, praise, and adore his Greatness; to fear, love, and obey that most loving and glorious LORD; to give him our hearty

Rom. iv. 25.

ty thanks for all the blessings we actually enjoy in our bodies and souls; and then to ground all the hopes we entertain of a perfect Future upon the firm Rock of our Salvation, Jesus Christ, the immaculate LAMB, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. NOW TO THAT GREAT LORD, who is to whom all be praised, and whose Greatness is unsearchable, be all honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

F I N I S.



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